

# Town of Burkittsville, Maryland



Comprehensive Plan  
1996 - 2016

## RESOLUTION

### ADOPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF BURKITTSVILLE, MARYLAND: 1996-2016

WHEREAS, the Burkittsville Planning Commission recommended to the Mayor and Council of Burkittsville, Maryland, pursuant to Section 3.07 of Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended, the Burkittsville Comprehensive Plan containing maps, text, and illustrations to guide future land use, transportation, conservation, preservation, and public facility and service decisions for the Town of Burkittsville, and

WHEREAS, the Burkittsville Planning Commission conducted a Public Hearing on the Burkittsville Comprehensive Plan, on the 22nd day of November 1996, pursuant to public notice duly given, and recommended adoption of the Burkittsville Comprehensive Plan to the Mayor and Town Council, the local legislative body, and

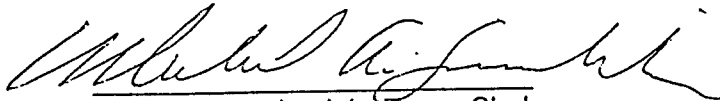
WHEREAS, the Mayor and Town Council of Burkittsville acting on behalf of the citizens of the Town are desirous of protecting the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the community, and wish to preserve the historic areas and architectural heritage of the community, and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Town Council of Burkittsville scheduled a Public Hearing on the Burkittsville Comprehensive Plan on the 22nd day of January 1997, pursuant to public notice duly given and due to a lack of quorum, conducted the Public Hearing to the 28th day of January 1997 pursuant to public notice duly given, therefore be it

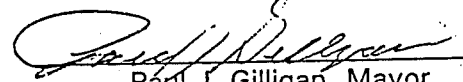
RESOLVED by the Mayor and Town Council hereby adopt THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF BURKITTSVILLE, MARYLAND: 1996-2016 which contains the Comprehensive Land Use Map for the Community and all maps, text, and illustrations contained therein.

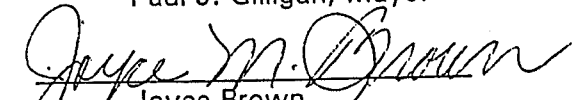
The undersigned hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was approved and adopted on the 28th day of January, 1997.

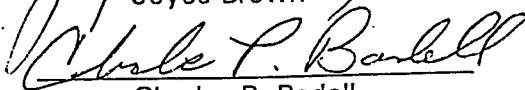
ATTEST:

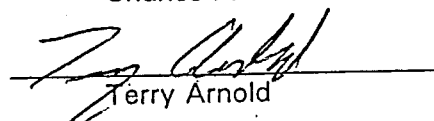
  
Michael Smerkanich, Town Clerk

MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL  
OF BURKITTSVILLE, MARYLAND

  
Paul J. Gilligan, Mayor

  
Joyce Brown

  
Charles P. Badell

  
Terry Arnold

# The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Burkittsville Maryland

*As Adopted by the  
Mayor & Town Council of  
Burkittsville*

(January 28, 1997)

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## Mayor and Council

Paul Gilligan, Mayor  
Terry Arnold  
Charles Badell  
Joyce Brown

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## Planning & Zoning Commission

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Charles Badell  
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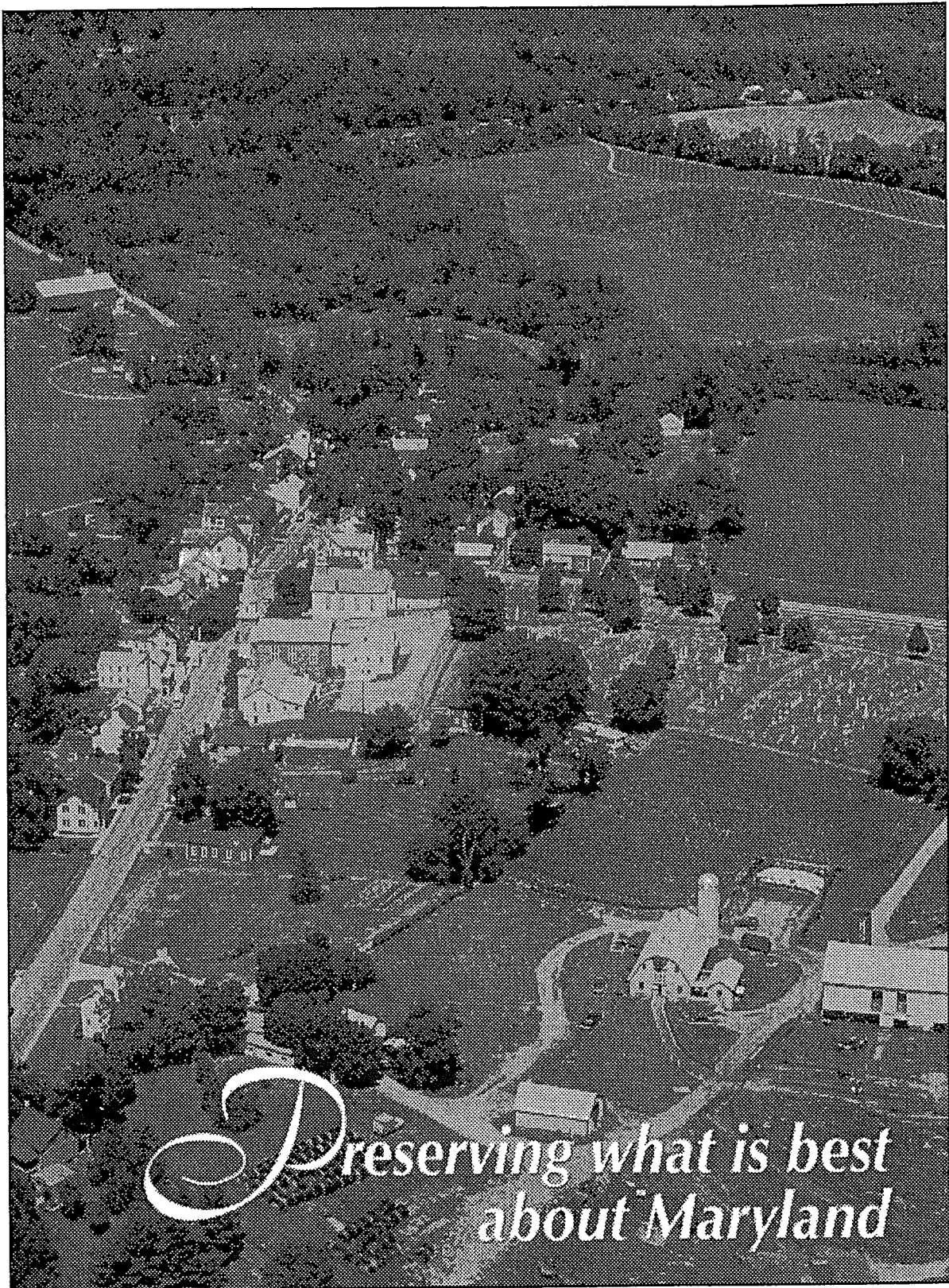
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# Purpose and Intent

**T**he Comprehensive Plan is an official public document prepared by the Burkittsville Planning and Zoning Commission and adopted by the Mayor and Town Council. The Plan is a long-range guide for land use, transportation, community facilities, sensitive area protection, and preservation of resources. It is used to guide public policy and development decisions in and around the Town. If respected and followed, it will help to balance the needs and desires of the residents while protecting the quality of life, agricultural and heritage resources that make Burkittsville a special place to live, work or visit.

The Comprehensive Plan and Map set

the policy which guides land use decisions, although it is not a development ordinance. The majority of the Comprehensive Plan policies focus on the next twenty years and provide guidance for decisions related to development, preservation or conservation. The Comprehensive Plan establishes the framework and basis for the Town zoning and subdivision regulations. The Goals and Policies of this Plan are implemented through the regulatory and funding decisions of Town, County, and State officials. These policies can be amended as new information becomes available, or to address a major change, without straying from the major goals of the Plan. ■

## Seven Visions for Maryland

**B**urkittsville's Comprehensive Plan is coordinated with the Regional Plan process of the Frederick County Department of Planning and Zoning, which in turn is governed by the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992. This act, prompted by statewide fiscal, environmental, and preservation issues and by concern with sprawling development, including the unprecedented loss of agricultural, environmental and historical resources over the past two decades, established seven "visions," as stated at right:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas.
2. Sensitive areas are protected.
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected.
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption is practiced.
6. To assure the achievement of 1 through 5 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.
7. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

# Goals, Objectives, and Policies

**T**he goals, objectives, and policies included in the Burkittsville Comprehensive Plan provide a framework for the policy recommendations and implementation strategies that the Town will follow for the next twenty years.

*Goals* are defined as the ultimate desirable ends toward which public programs and actions are directed.

*Objectives* are defined as the specified and immediate ends toward which public pro-

grams and actions are directed.

*Objectives* are more explicit than goals, and whenever possible, are stated in terms of specific actions or results. Policies represent the steps that are to be taken in pursuit of those objectives.

Background and discussion of the following goals, objectives, and policies may be found in subsequent sections of the Report. ■

**Goal:** Preserve Burkittsville's Integrity as a Rural Historic Village.

**Objective:** Maintain the Town's viewshed of surrounding farmland and mountain ridge.

*Policy:* Coordinate with County and State authorities to make maximum use of existing programs to purchase agricultural, conservation, and scenic easements, and to actively encourage other voluntary measures by local land owners to conserve open space and preserve nearby agricultural resources both within and outside the Town corporate limits.

**Objective:** Construction is to be consistent with the general appearance and placement of existing structures.

*Policy:* Adopt basic structural and street design guidelines in the zoning code and subdivision regulations.

**Objective:** Preserve existing building inventory.

*Policy:* Ensure that local home owners and historical societies have full information about County, State, federal, and philanthropic programs that can be used in the maintenance or rehabilitation of structures and property within the Town.

*Policy:* Update the building survey within the Town to include recent additions and renovations.

**Objective:** A Streetscape Improvement Project.

*Policy:* County, State and other sources of funding to finance an overall Streetscape Improvement Project to remove overhead wires and poles and conceal all utilities along Main Street. This should involve restoration of sidewalks, installation of compatible lighting fixtures, improvements to the road surface to reduce vehicular speeds, planting of additional street trees, and improvements to the Town Park to promote better recreational opportunities for residents of Burkittsville.

**Objective:** Promote and Support the Economic Base as it Pertains to the Historic Village.

*Policy:* Ensure that local home owners, churches, organizations, and historical societies have full information about County, State, federal, and philanthropic programs that promote and support economic activities that will protect and preserve the integrity of the historic village.

**Goal:** Preserve Burkittsville's Quiet Rural Character and Quality of Life.

**Objective:** Minimize changes in current land use.

*Policy:* Support land use initiatives and conservation processes to preserve the Town's traditional rural character.

*Policy:* Maintain subdivision and zoning ordinances that assist in maintaining the Town's traditional rural character.

**Objective:** Control the speed and volume of vehicle traffic.

*Policy:* Coordinate with Frederick County and the State of Maryland to provide better enforcement of vehicular traffic speeds in the Town.

*Policy:* Encourage Frederick County to eliminate the "collector" status road designation for Gapland Road and reassign "collector" status to Arnoldstown Road and Picnic Woods Road north of Burkittsville.



*Policy:* Obtain a qualified transportation consultant to prepare a transportation plan that is designed to effectively manage vehicular traffic within the Town, improve pedestrian access and safety, and, where possible, redirect vehicular traffic using existing roadways outside of Town.

*Policy:* Cooperate with the State of Maryland and non-profit organizations to acquire easements or other access agreements for interpretive pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle trails around the Town.

## **Goal: Protect Sensitive Areas Within Burkittsville**

**Objective: Protect the annual floodplain along Burkitts Run.**

*Policy:* Development will not be permitted in areas designated as Annual Floodplain, consisting of soil types designated by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service as areas of general wet land which provides natural water retention.

*Policy:* A 100 ft. buffer will be established from the center line of Burkitts Run. Development will not be permitted within the designated buffer area.

**Objective: Protect the Town's groundwater resources.**

*Policy:* The Town will provide information for and advice to property owners for removing abandoned gasoline tanks and other significant point and nonpoint sources of groundwater pollution within the Town.

**Goal:** Restore Potable Water Resources and Effective Wastewater Treatment for the Residents of Burkittsville.

**Objective:** To facilitate maintenance and repair of septic systems for Burkittsville households.

*Policy:* Establish a greenbelt around parts or all of Burkittsville through voluntary sale of easements or land by local landowners, to provide space for replacement of failing septic fields.

*Policy:* Explore technical and financial feasibility of upgrading existing septic fields and systems or consolidating into a community septic system.

*Policy:* Procure future areas for consolidation of septic fields through the use of easements or through fee simple acquisition by the Town.

**Objective:** To facilitate adequate and potable water for all Burkittsville households.

*Policy:* Explore technical and financial feasibility of upgrading wells or providing a future Community Water System for the existing structures within the Town. ■



# Burkittsville's Heritage

**B**urkittsville and the immediately adjoining area encompass some of the most significant historic resources in Frederick County.

European settlement of the region began in the 1720's, first along the Potomac River and then on scattered farms north of the river. In 1732, the Maryland Proprietors issued a letter offering land in Western Maryland at attractive terms, in an effort to entice some of the German settlers following the valleys of the Monocacy River and Catoctin Creek toward Virginia to stop in Maryland instead. The road that became Burkittsville's Main Street, the ancient Conococheague Trail, was made public in 1738. Over the next century, a small village developed along the intersection of the old Conococheague and Seneca trails.

By 1760, Elias Willard owned land in the vicinity of the present village of Burkittsville. His home was the site of occasional Reformed Church services held by traveling pastors. In 1768, Main Street became part of a road linking a mill on Antietam Creek and the mouth of the Monocacy River via Crampton's Gap. About 1820, Joshua Harley opened a store, where he became postmaster for the village in 1824. The community was initially called Harley's Post Office, but soon was renamed Burkittsville after one of the town's leading landholders. During the 1820's, a second Lutheran congregation began meeting regularly. In 1829, the two congregations built a church which they shared until 1859, when it was replaced by the white brick Lutheran Church that still stands on East Main Street.

By the 1830s, Burkittsville had become a bustling village. Industries in the village during the period from 1830 to the begin-

ning of the Civil War included a tannery at the western end of Main Street and a wide variety of shops located primarily on East Main Street, including cabinet shops, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, dry goods stores, tinsmiths, a tailor shop, and a harness shop. They served a thriving farm community in the surrounding area.

Burkittsville was the site of one of the three Civil War engagements fought on September 14, 1862, as Union General George McClellan pursued Robert E. Lee's divided Army of Northern Virginia west from Frederick. The Confederates, under the operational command of Col. Thomas T. Munford and Col. William A. Parham, had withdrawn to defensive positions on the side of South Mountain below Crampton's Cap. The Union forces consisted of the Union VI Corps under the command of General William B. Franklin. In the afternoon of September 14, Union infantry launched an assault across the properties at the western end of Burkittsville and the adjoining fields. By late afternoon, the Union had successfully cleared the pass at Crampton's Gap. But Franklin, who had been slow to begin his march to Burkittsville and slow to overwhelm the smaller Confederate force, failed to get into Pleasant Valley in time to drive a wedge between the separated elements of Lee's command. His delay in forcing Crampton's Gap was instrumental in permitting Lee to reunite his forces and then fight McClellan to a tactical draw at Sharpsburg three days later. The Battle of Crampton's Gap constitutes one of the intriguing might-have-beens of the War Between the States.

In 1884, a Civil War correspondent, George A. Townsend, who wrote under the pen

name "Gath," purchased land along the crest of South Mountain at Crampton's Gap with a panoramic view of the Middletown Valley and the Burkittsville battlefield. He erected a stone memorial arch to war correspondents, and also erected several stone dwellings and a mausoleum on the property, which he called "Gapland." Until obscured by vegetation in the 1970's, the War Correspondents Memorial was a prominent feature above Burkittsville and could be seen from many parts of the Middletown Valley. This estate was acquired by the State of Maryland and became the Gathland State Park during the mid 20th century. Many of the 1880's stone structures still survive, although the main dwelling no longer exists and the mausoleum is unused. Burkittsville remained a farming community after the Civil War and its rural landscape was undisturbed by events in Middletown and Brunswick.

The Town of Burkittsville is widely known for its distinctive historic structures, featuring several architectural styles in the town. The four general architectural periods represented in the town are the stone vernacular farmhouses of the late 18th century; the Federal style of the early 19th century; the Greek Revival of the period about 1830-1850; and the eclectic style of the Mid-Victorian period about 1860 to 1880. The Federal and Greek Revival buildings are usually brick and the later buildings are frame. Burkittsville also has some log outbuildings and rear wings, as well as some small log dwellings with exterior clapboard German siding. The majority of the original structures in Burkittsville are still standing, although some have been modified through the years. At present, Burkittsville remains untouched by contemporary suburban development. ■



# Demographic Trends

## Population and Housing Trends

**B**urkittsville's population has not changed much over the past century. It peaked in 1870 at a high of 273 persons. Over the next sixty years the population steadily declined, reaching a low of 173 in 1930. Then the town grew again from 1930 to 1970, when the population reached 221 persons. Since 1970, the town population has been experiencing a slow decline. As of January 1995, the town population was 190 persons, the same as it was in 1950. Below is a table showing the historic population growth for Burkittsville.

	Town and County Population Trends							
	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995
Burkittsville	173	177	190	208	221	202	194	190
Frederick Co.	54,440	57,312	62,287	71,930	84,927	114,792	150,208	174,238

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

## Population Characteristics

**C**ensus estimates for 1990 indicate a household population of 194 persons with 71 occupied housing units, or 2.7 persons per household. The population was almost evenly split between men and women (i.e., 49 percent male, 51 percent female). The average age of Burkittsville residents was 34 years. Twenty-three percent of the population was under the age of 18 and 9 percent of Burkittsville's residents were over the age of 65. Seventy-three percent of the households in the town were occupied by families. Of those family households, 91 percent were headed by married couples. Almost all of the population within the town limits is classified as Caucasian (i.e., 97 percent).

Seventy-six percent of the town residents have a high school degree. Twenty-two percent have at least a bachelor's degree. Burkittsville's families are engaged in a wide range of occupations - agricultural, blue collar, crafts, managerial, professional, and academic - and have a correspondingly broad range of incomes.

Overall, Burkittsville reflects a type of transitional growth that has taken place elsewhere in Frederick County, as young families with school-age children have moved into communities with an older population of long-time residents. If Burkittsville's population were to grow substantially, this would have implications for issues involving schools, parks, libraries, and child care services. But the addition of younger families is generally good news for the town, making it easier for Burkittsville to remain a vital community in the years ahead. ■

# Natural and Cultural Features

## Natural Features In and Around Burkittsville

**T**he South Mountain range rises on Burkittsville's western border, reaching a high point of about 1,200 feet north of Crampton's gap. South Mountain is characterized by a continuous ridge line. The mountain has slopes exceeding 25 percent along its sides, with a rounded ridge consisting of shallower grades. Burkittsville has no slopes exceeding 25 percent within its boundaries.

Near Burkittsville, only the lower slopes of South Mountain have been farmed in recent decades. The upper slopes are mostly woodland, with a few houses along Gapland Road. Small bogs and the steep slopes of the mountain provide micro-habitats to a wide variety of plants and organisms.

The soils around Burkittsville are part of the Myersville and Fauquier loam series. There is a small area of Chewacla soils along Burkitts Run, a small stream that runs near the northern boundary of the town. The Soil Conservation Service considers the Middletown Valley in general and the Burkittsville area in particular to contain prime farmland. At the same time, most of the land is unsuitable for intensive development (in the absence of a public sewage system) because the bedrock is so close to the surface that it limits on-site sewage disposal.

The two streams near or in Burkittsville, Broad Run and Burkitts Run, flow into Catoctin Creek, which in turn is one of two major streams serving the lower Middletown Valley. These two streams form three drainage basins flowing into the Potomac River. In 1968, the Soil Conservation

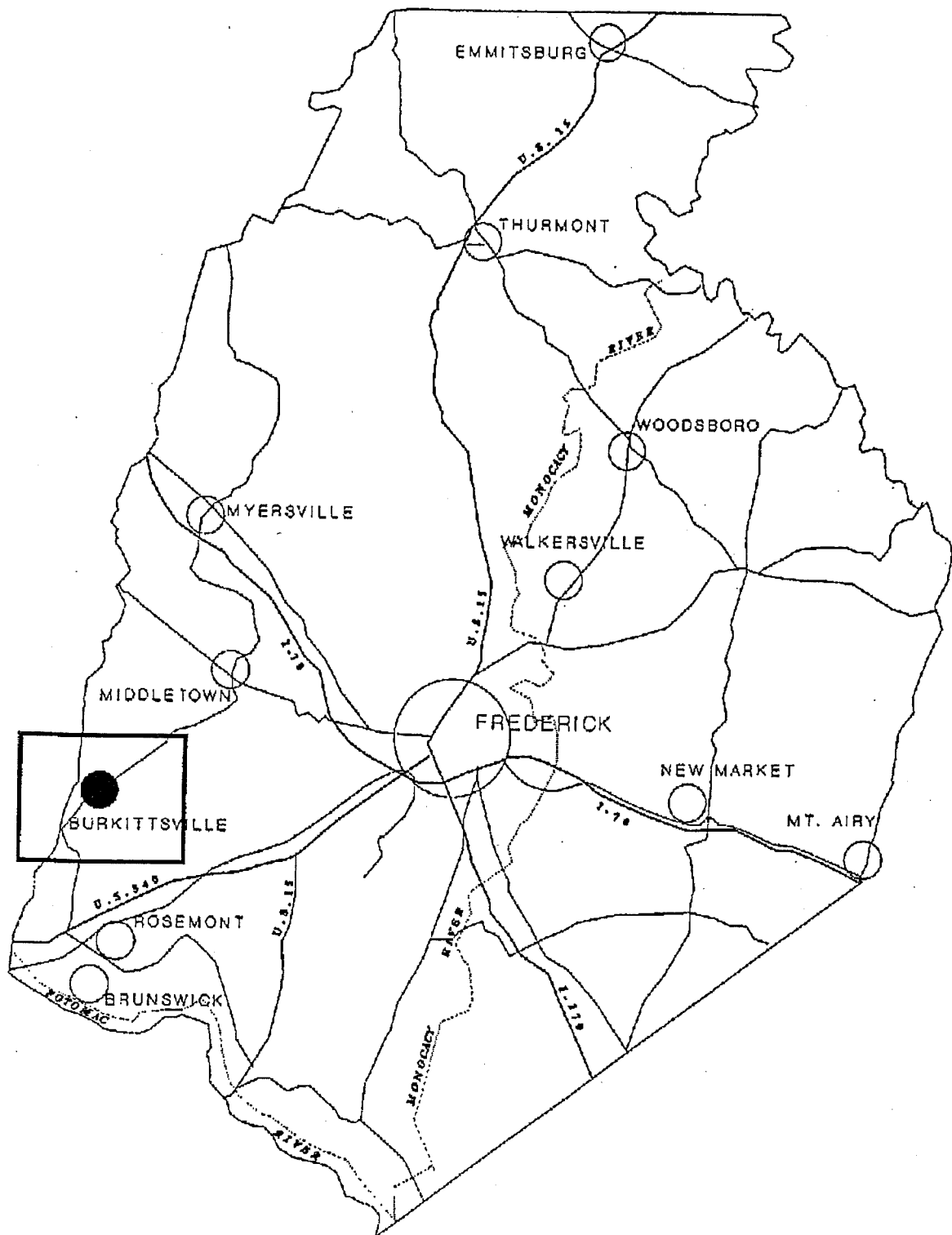
Service identified potential water impoundments in Frederick County. Broad Run (west), located directly northeast of Burkittsville, is one of these. It is estimated to have a maximum capacity of 60 million gallons per day. The impoundment site is currently in cultivation.

One flood plain is located within the boundaries of Burkittsville, to the north, straddling Burkitts Run, as shown in the Sensitive Areas Map. Another flood plain is south of town, straddling a tributary of Broad Run. Both are classified as annual flood plain areas. The 1992 Maryland Planning Act requires local governments to identify and protect streams, stream buffers, and 100-year flood plains. At present, best management practices and other programs to protect streams are voluntary.

The flood plains near Burkittsville are also classified by the Maryland Department of the Environment as wetlands adjoining streams, rivers, and shorelines. The ponds in and around Burkittsville are classified as palustrine wetlands. Three of these ponds are within the town boundaries.

Burkittsville lies within Hydrologic Unit III, which is characterized by average and below-average ground water capacity. Burkittsville's ground water conditions are helped by the standing forests on South Mountain, which reduce water runoff and replenish ground water in the local aquifer.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has estimated that at least 413 native Maryland species are currently threatened with extinction. In Frederick County, 16 animal species and 82 plant species are classified as rare, threatened, or endangered. None of these is present in Burkittsville itself. ■



## Burkittsville Location

## Environmental Priorities

**T**he State of Maryland requires that comprehensive plans include consideration of four elements: stream buffers, 100 year flood plain areas, threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes.

Burkittsville is currently not a habitat for threatened or endangered plant or animal species. The Town does not have slopes exceeding 25 percent grade or 100 year flood plains. An area of annual flood plain soils is indicated along the northern border of the town along Burkitts Run. This annual flood plain area should be protected, ideally by avoiding any development along its banks through the use of a riparian buffer.

Burkittsville's environmental issues are defined by the town's small size and straightforward environmental profile. There are no current industrial processes operating within the town, although industries that operated within the Town generations ago may have contributed to current groundwater problems. The land uses in Burkittsville are primarily agricultural and residential and have limited impact on the environment in the surrounding area. Existing state laws and regulations govern the dumping of wastes or pesticides into the one stream that runs through Burkittsville. ■

## Burkittsville as an Historically Sensitive Area

**T**he Town of Burkittsville has no counterpart elsewhere in Maryland. It has very few anywhere in the United States. While many other American towns have historic buildings or even historic neighborhoods, it is extremely rare to have an entire town still look as much like it

did a century ago. Almost no other towns have retained the traditional, once- common residential main street backed directly by farmland.

Burkittsville is laid out in the rectilinear main street and alley pattern that typified villages in Central and Western Maryland in the late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. But whereas most other older communities in Frederick County have shifted to a suburban configuration, Burkittsville retains the traditional village layout, with a spine represented by Main Street backed by farm land. In other ways, too, Burkittsville is an unusual surviving example of the small, self-sustaining, self-contained communities that evolved without codes and regulations over a period of many decades, with a narrow main street, and with most buildings that abut the sidewalk edge.

The town center is situated at the crossroads of Potomac Street (i.e., MD 17) and Main Street (i.e., Gapland Road). Residential structures, a number of churches, and buildings with various commercial uses (primarily home-based businesses) span the length of Main Street for approximately one mile. A few structures that once served as shops survive at the intersection of Main Street and Potomac Street, but are not currently in commercial use. The U.S. Post Office is located just east of the town center. Burkittsville contains 71 buildings overall, 59 are homes, of which 54 single-family detached structures, and three are churches.

Potomac Street is a two-lane paved Maryland highway. Main Street/Gapland Road is 32 ft. wide, with curbs on both sides. Brick or concrete sidewalks front some of the houses, varying in width from 3.5 to 5 ft. The streetscape features a number of street trees, although no particular planting pattern or predominant species is evident. ■



The original plat of Burkittsville contained lots varying from one-quarter to two acres. The Burkittsville Planning Regulations, originally adopted in 1976, required all new residential structures for the majority of Main Street to have a minimum one-acre lot size, 60 ft. lot width and established a maximum front-yard setback requirement. Outside of the Historic Village zoning district, the Planning Regulations established a five-acre minimum lot size. Only two new dwellings have been constructed in Burkittsville since the Planning Regulations were adopted in 1976, although some of the other individual residences have undergone minor renovation.

The streetscape itself is consistent in scale, with the exception of the churches and the former seminary building which now serves as an apartment house. The houses lining Main Street are primarily two and a half stories, having the same roof ridge. Most of the structures in Burkittsville are federal or Victorian in style. Most structures are rectangular or L-shaped. Almost all of the structures fronting Main Street have full-width front porches. The narrow street corridor and the distinctive front porches

contribute to the visual coherence of the village. Most of the lots lining Main Street are served by rear alleys, with farmland abutting the alleys to the rear of the lots. A cemetery overlooking farm fields is located on a prominent hill north of the Main Street and east of Potomac Street. Main Street is bounded at either end with open, undeveloped land.

Burkittsville experienced very little residential growth in the past twenty years despite rapid growth in the surrounding area. The Brunswick Planning Region, of which Burkittsville is a part, has grown 31 percent in the last fifteen years, or just over two percent annually. Frederick County has grown even faster, at approximately 3.5 percent annually over the past decade.

Burkittsville was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. This nomination was an important factor in the preservation of the original settlement pattern and provided an impetus to discourage suburban development patterns within and around the village. National Register designation also provided an important incentive for property owners to restore and protect the existing historic structures within the Town

#### Approved or Pending Agricultural Districts and Easements Near Burkittsville

Identification	Owner	Size	Status
AD-79-9	Willard	101 Acres	District Approved 1980
AD-82-13	Brandenberg	199 Acres	Easement Approved 1985
AD-83-19	Hottel	349 Acres	Easement Approved 1985
AD-84-1	Fulks	446 Acres	Easement Approved 1986
AD-87-1	Hottel	215 Acres	Easement Pending
AD-90-8	Pry	150 Acres	District Approved 1990
AD-90-9	Pry	124 Acres	District Approved 1990
AD-91-3	Allen	127 Acres	District Approved 1991
AD-91-4	Vorac	215 Acres	District Approved 1991
AD-95-5	Schaffer	158 Acres	Pending Agricultural District

Source: Frederick County Department of Planning and Zoning

boundaries.

As of 1996, the development that has occurred to the east and north of Burkittsville is not yet visible from Burkittsville itself. In three directions, Burkittsville still retains a viewshed consisting of open farmland. To the west is the forested ridge of South Mountain. Only a few of the houses on the lower slope of the mountain, along Mountain Church Road, are visible from the village.

The responses to the town survey conducted in 1995 revealed that the dominating issue for Burkittsville residents is how to preserve the existing land uses and historic sites that surround, abut, and overlook the town. Effective private and public partnerships are endeavoring to conserve much of the South Mountain viewshed, working cooperatively with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to protect and maintain Gathland State Park, the War Correspondents Memorial landmark at Crampton's Gap, and the adjacent Civil War battle sites north and west of the Town.

As a result of these efforts and the concerns of individual landowners, the Burkittsville area has the second largest concentration of active Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation easements and districts within Frederick County. Within a three mile radius of Burkittsville, ten farms containing 2,084 acres of land participate in the County Agricultural Preservation Program and four of these farms have sold their agricultural easements to the State of Maryland. Most of the farms that have sold their easements are located directly south and southeast of the town of Burkittsville.

The table below indicates the Agricultural Preservation Districts and Agricultural Easements through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, Inc. located within one mile of Burkittsville.

In addition to the list above, Maryland's Program Open Space has acquired the 97-acre Shisler farm and an easement on the 151-acre Miller Farm directly north of the town. Permanent protection of both the Shisler and the Miller Farms will be guaranteed through conservation easements jointly held by the Maryland Environmental Trust and the Maryland Historical Trust that forbid subdivision of either farm. Protection of these two properties also meets the objectives of the Maryland Rural Historic Village Protection Program, a statewide program of the Maryland Environmental Trust and the Maryland Historical Trust in which Burkittsville participates.

Additional efforts continue with other interested property owners in the Burkittsville area, making use of the federal ISTEA Transportation Enhancement funding to preserve farms which figured prominently in the Battle of Crampton's Gap.

Specific issues of land use are addressed in the next section. But the broader issue for Burkittsville is not just how to manage development. Like many other small towns, Burkittsville would prefer to remain undisturbed. But if development occurs here, the loss will not just be to Burkittsville's residents, but to the State of Maryland and, for that matter, to the historic heritage of the United States. Located within an hour and a half travel time from downtown Washington, Burkittsville stands as a living example of how much of Middle Atlantic rural America looked a hundred years ago - not just in a few houses or streets, nor even an entire town, but a package complete with surrounding rural viewshed. It is a resource that should rank very high on the historic equivalent of an endangered species list. Suburban development will not just damage this legacy, but destroy it. ■

# Sensitive Areas

## Sensitive Areas

**T**he Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 requires local governments to include a sensitive areas element in their comprehensive plans. This element must contain goals, objectives, policies, and standards designed to protect sensitive areas from the adverse effects of development. With the intent of protecting both the Chesapeake Bay and land resources, the Act requires protection of four environmentally sensitive areas: streams and their buffers, 100-year floodplains, habitats of threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes. Local jurisdictions may choose to protect other types of sensitive areas, including natural or cultural resources. In the case of Burkittsville, important consideration is given to Burkittsville's unique streetscape, viewsheds, historic and archaeological sites, and groundwater resources. The sections below describe sensitive areas in and around the Town of Burkittsville which warrant inclusion and protection through the Comprehensive Plan. ■

## Streams and Their Buffers

**B**urkitts Run is the only stream within Burkittsville and is indicated in the Sensitive Areas Map. Preservation of natural land and vegetation along a stream provides a buffer that protects the stream from sediment, nitrogen, phosphorous and other pollutants. No formal buffers have been established along Burkitts Run. Development has not historically occurred in this vicinity and this area is used for farming. The stream lacks riparian buffers for most of its length. ■

## Floodplains

**T**he 100-year floodplain is the land area along a stream that is susceptible to inundation by a flood of a magnitude that would be expected to occur on average only once every 100 years as a result of rainfall and runoff from upland areas. The 100-year floodplains of streams in the vicinity of Burkittsville are shown on the Sensitive Areas Map. The 100-year floodplain does not encroach on the town.

Annual floodplain comprise soil types defined as annual floodplain by the County Planning Commission or soil types designated by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service as areas of general wet land which provides natural water retention. The area of Burkitts Run does contain annual floodplain, as indicated on the Sensitive Areas Map. ■

## Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species

**C**ertain areas, due to their physical or biological features, provide important elements for the maintenance, expansion, and long-term survival of threatened and endangered species. These areas, called habitats, may include breeding, feeding, resting, migratory, or overwintering areas. The Natural Heritage Program of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources maintains the inventory of rare, threatened, and endangered species.

Burkittsville will require that a developer supply information on the presence or absence of threatened and endangered species on the project site. This information must be coordinated with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources - Natural Heritage

Program. On any site that contains threatened or endangered species, development will be clustered away from the species habitat and will be designed in a low impact manner.

## Steep Slopes

**S**teep slopes are considered sensitive areas because of their potential for soil erosion and slope instability. Clearing and grading of land results in increased soil erosion. The steeper the slope is, the greater the potential for erosion. Runoff from rainfall carries eroded soil into streams, which increases turbidity of streams. Sediment carries heavy metals, pesticides, nutrients, and other pollutants that destroy plant and animal life in streams.

For the purposes of this report, slopes over 15 percent are considered to be steep. The Town of Burkittsville is characterized by gently sloping terrain. Limited areas with steep slopes are found on the north end of town near Burkitts Run and north of Weiner Drive. Outside of the town, steep slopes are found to the west along South Mountain and directly east of the historic trace of Ahalt Distillery Road. ■

## Groundwater Resources

**S**ince Burkittsville lacks a public water system, continued vitality of the Town depends highly on the protection and enhancement of its existing groundwater resources. The significant expense and resulting development that can be associated with construction of a municipal water system encourages the Town to examine a range of alternatives to provide potable water for the residents of the Town. Foremost among these options is the protection and enhancement of Burkittsville's groundwater resources.

While it is assumed that failing septic systems are contributing to the further deterioration of the Town's groundwater resources, other point discharge sources may also be sources of additional contamination, including abandoned fuel tanks or waste storage containers.

The Town will explore the feasibility of upgrading existing private septic fields & systems, including consolidation into a community-wide septic system. Also, the Town will work with property owners to remove abandoned gasoline tanks & other significant sources of groundwater pollution within the Town. ■

## Scenic Areas and Viewsheds

**B**urkittsville's scenic areas and viewsheds are included as sensitive areas because the rolling farmland which encompasses the town and the forested ridgeline of South Mountain which overlooks the town are two of Burkittsville's most valuable and irreplaceable resources. The Burkittsville Cemetery (i.e., Union Cemetery), which is located on the most prominent hill within the historic village, provides exceptional views of the town, the surrounding agricultural landscape, South Mountain, and the Civil War battlefield site of Crampton's Gap/South Mountain. ■

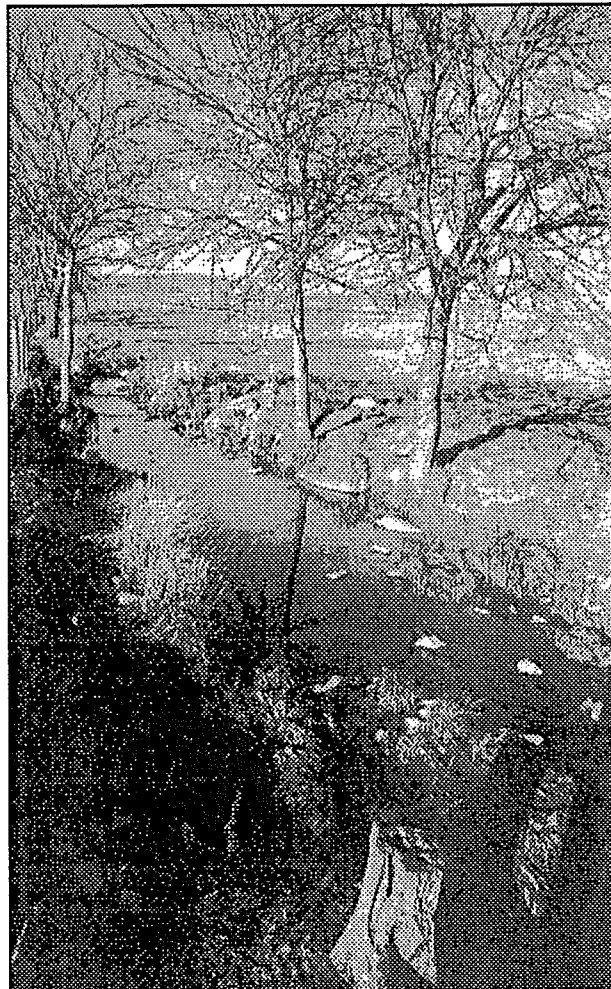
## Historic and Archaeological Sites

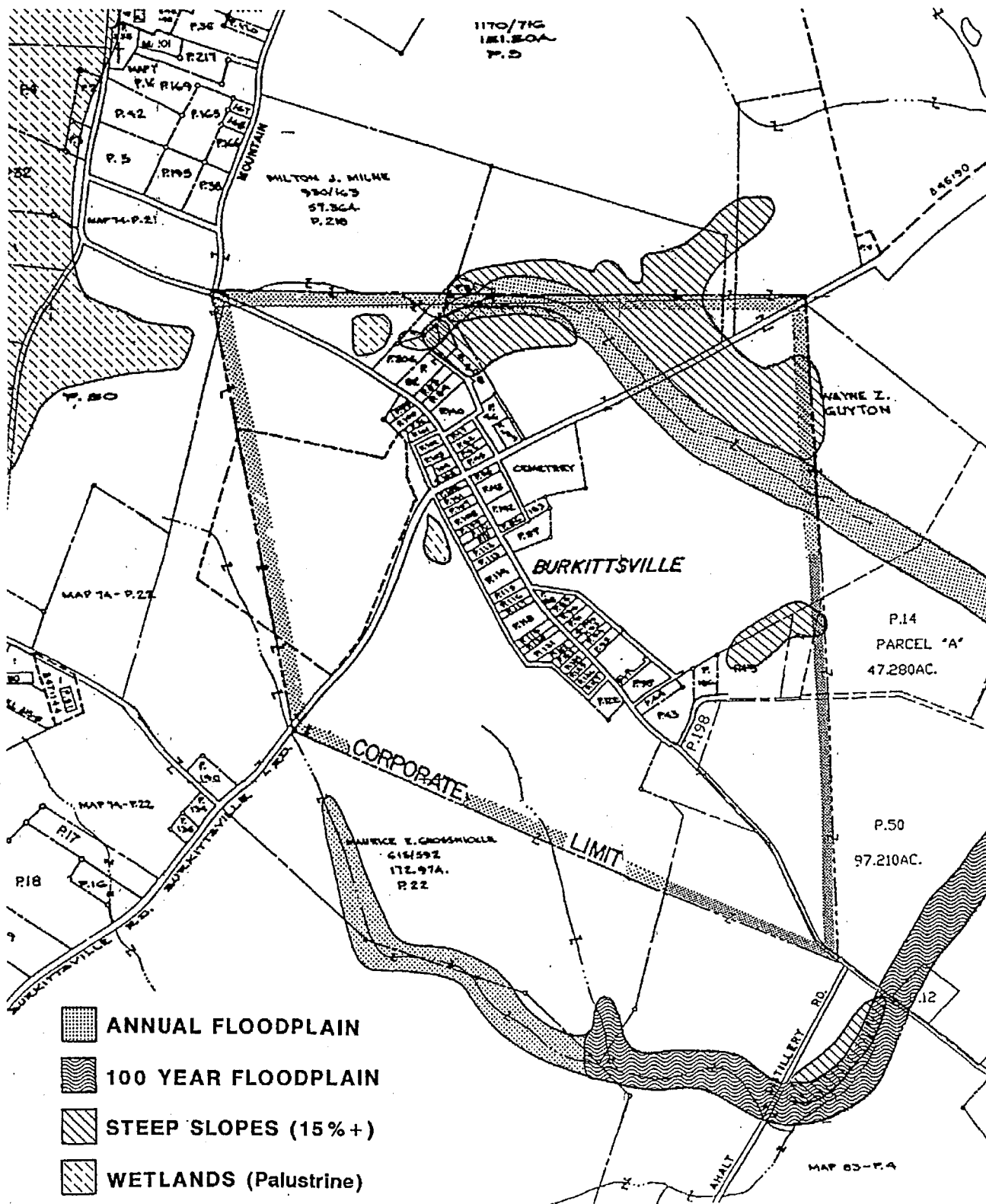
**B**urkittsville and the surrounding area comprise one of the most historic sections of Frederick County. The Burkittsville area contains a wealth of historic and archaeological sites ranging from the dis-

tinctive buildings and streets in the Burkittsville National Register Historic District, the land areas that comprise the Civil War battlefield of South Mountain/Crampton's Gap, and the historic and prehistoric sites archaeological sites from many millennia of human habitation in southwestern Frederick County. Because of the local and national importance of many of the historic and archaeological sites, these too are included in this Plan as sensitive areas.

Burkittsville is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Burkittsville Historic District contains approximately seventy buildings featuring Federal, Classical Greek Revival, and early Victorian era architectural types. No more

than six structures have been constructed since 1900. The Burkittsville Historic District is included as a sensitive area. The archaeological sites surround Burkittsville and are included as a sensitive area. The archaeological sites inventory includes both historic and prehistoric sites, including some associated with Native American habitation from the archaic through the Woodland periods, and with the occupation of the Town by Union and Confederate armies in September and October 1862. The archaeological sites are listed in the Maryland Inventory only, and not on the National Register. ■





## Sensitive Areas

# Land Use

## Existing Pattern of Development

The Town of Burkittsville represents an early Nineteenth Century village development pattern within an incorporated municipality. Burkittsville includes a compact town center, and features a dense clustering of residential, commercial, institutional, and former cottage industry structures along Main Street. The Town contains seventy-one buildings; fifty-nine are residential, of which fifty-four are single family detached; three churches; the remaining nine structures contain places of business.

Within the Town corporate limits, about one-quarter of the land area is improved. Along Main Street, most of the structures are built up to or near the sidewalk and street, and most structures have distinctive full-width front porches. Main Street is 32 ft. wide with curbs on both sides. Sidewalks extend intermittently along Main Street with the traditional village section of Town. The sidewalks vary from 3 1/2 ft. to 5 ft. in width. Street trees are distributed in a random pattern and no particular species are predominant.

Nearly three-quarters of the land within Burkittsville is committed to active agricultural operations completely encompassing the village area. The surrounding agricultural operations are primarily oriented to crop production, although pasture and vineyard land uses are found within the municipal boundaries on the west end of Town. The encircling agricultural land uses provide an extraordinary setting which is accentuated by the forested ridgeline of South Mountain, that exceeds 1,100 ft. in elevation one mile west of the Burkittsville's corporate limits.

Burkittsville's unique character can be attributed to a number of specific elements, each of which are integral to the visual identity of the Town. These elements include the compact development pattern in the historic village; the boundary or edge between the developed area and the surrounding agricultural uses; the similar placement of structures as they relate to Main Street, which is in a formally coherent pattern; the distinctive Main Street corridor, and the interlinking series of alleys which back onto most lots within the Town. An additional element relates to the distinctive Civil War heritage of Burkittsville, which features a variety of structures that played a

Development Potential in Burkittsville

Generalized Zoning District	Undeveloped, Preliminary, or Approved Lots	Vacant Land Potential (Acres)	Total Dwelling Unit Potential
Historic District	0	1	1
Low Density Residential	221	221	44
Agriculture	0	0	0
Conservation	0	0	0
Total	221	222	45

Source: Frederick County Department of Planning and Zoning





role in the Battle of South Mountain/Crampton's Gap and its aftermath, including the visit by President Abraham Lincoln, as well as the currently undeveloped battlefield sites both within and immediately outside of the corporate limits.

The Town of Burkittsville has 221 acres of rural residential zoning located within the town boundaries. Under the current zoning regulations, this land could be developed into five-acre lots yielding approximately 44 new dwelling units. This would increase the number of private houses by about 75 percent and constitute a major and disruptive change to the existing character of the town.

Although the potential for new development does exist within the town's boundaries, current water and sewer restrictions would severely limit the possibilities of development at this time. ■

## Preservation Strategies

The development of Burkittsville took place during periods when shared architectural tastes, traditions, and technological limitations usually produced a harmonious series of structures, defined public spaces, and a clear and obligatory boundary between the village and agricultural uses. This is no longer the case. Today, more often than not, local architectural tastes and traditions are not as an important feature in new construction as they once were. Technology now allows for building designs that are completely different from past styles, as well as the possibilities offered by improved well and septic technology to move away from the town center. These factors, coupled with the loss of a direct relationship between town residents and the surrounding agricultural com-

munity, has removed the earlier prohibition from constructing housing on prime farmland. Today, it is far more likely that new construction will have no relationship to the prevalent structural patterns in the Town often resulting in newly constructed housing that is located on large lots away from the town center.

A combination of design review processes and architectural standards for new construction, as well as the location of any new construction within Burkittsville nearer to the historic village/town center and away from the periphery of the community are encouraged by this Plan. These strategies will be used to retain the visual coherence of the existing village should new development be proposed at Burkittsville. These strategies fully support the Goal of this Comprehensive Plan to Maintain Burkittsville's Historical Integrity as a Rural Village. In order to serve the limited number of development rights that exist within Burkittsville and locate them nearer to the town center along the existing street and alley network, it will be necessary for the Town to study and possibly seek to implement a community septic system or other form of sewerage disposal system to remove the potential for contamination of private water resources within the Town. A thorough analysis of community septic or sewerage issues and expenses is proposed to assess the costs and benefits of a future community effluent treatment system. Drainfield protection within the Town should be a priority in all development decisions.

This Plan recognizes that any new construction within the corporate limits of Burkittsville will potentially increase the cost of services that is borne by the municipality to provide for future services and for needed community septic, sewerage or com-

munity water systems. While new development will also increase Burkittsville's tax base, this will be offset by the increased need for municipal services. Ultimately, new residential development will result in a net deficit to the municipality. Every \$1.00 that can be generated by the Town from new residential development will be offset by the increased demand for services, such as community septic or water systems. It is estimated that increased municipal expenditures from new residential development will likely exceed \$2.00 to \$3.00 for every \$1.00 received in municipal tax revenue.

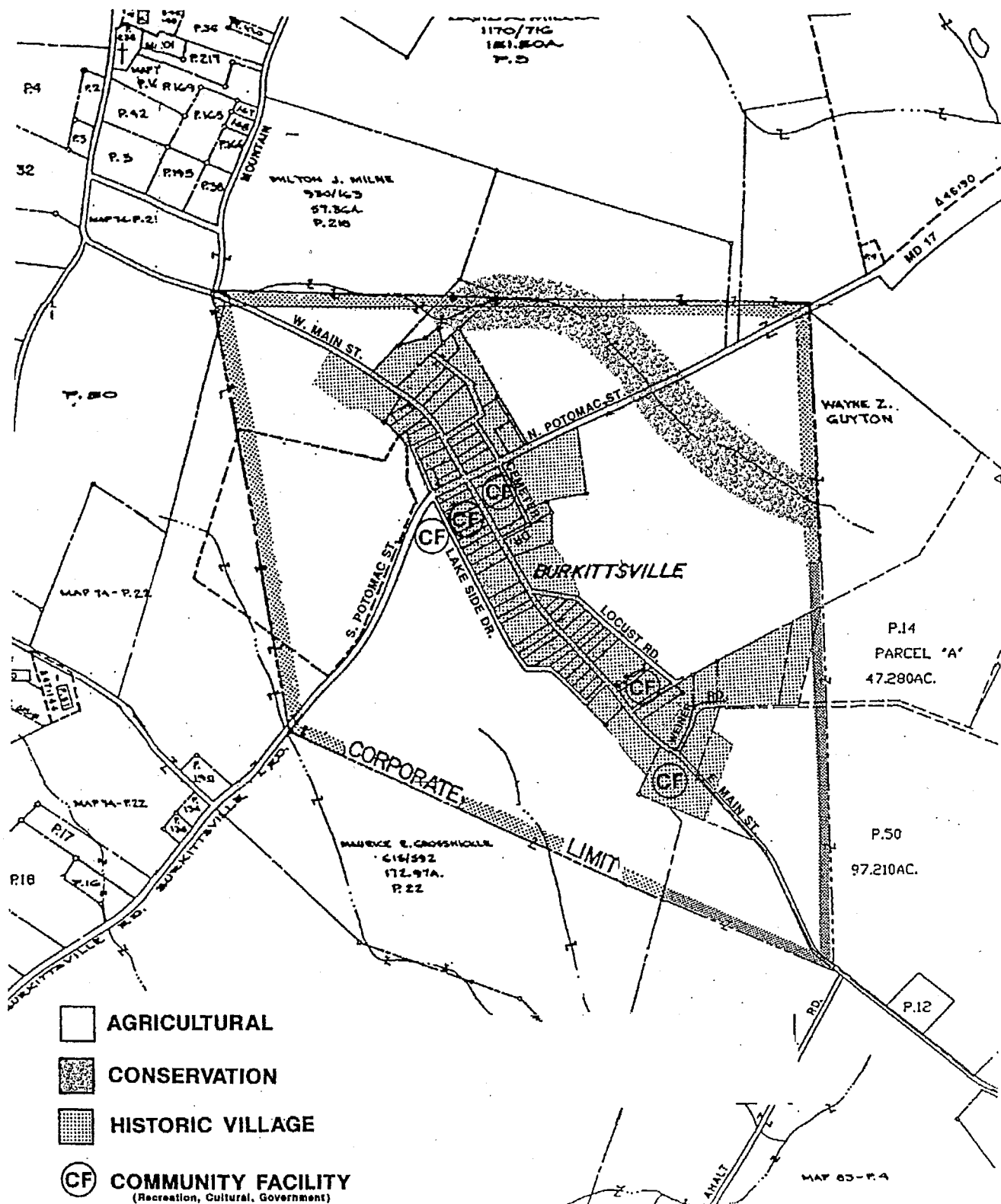
Business and industrial uses are taxed at a higher rate and have the potential to pay for more of their fair share of municipal service costs, although since no infrastructure is presently in place for community water or septic/sewerage systems, the up-front costs to the Town will be higher than projected business tax revenue in most cases. Because of Burkittsville's small size, it is clear that any new development, including commercial or industrial uses, will have a disproportionate impact on Town's financial status and will likely result in the need for additional revenue sources, including increased property taxes, to pay for future municipal infrastructure and services.

Accordingly, protection of farmland resources within Burkittsville is not merely an aesthetic or sentimental concern, but is a fiscally responsible policy by the Town.

This Plan establishes farmland preservation within the corporate limits of Burkittsville as a priority. This policy recognizes that local agriculture is a sustainable industry and that policies that impact farm equity can have a major economic impact on existing farm operations within Burkittsville, possibly leading to loss of the prime agricultural land through the subdivision process. Therefore, this Plan supports policies that

maintain the existing equity that the current agricultural operators have in their farms within Burkittsville, while providing for incentives for agricultural operators to voluntarily place their farmland or other agricultural resources under permanent easement protection.

This Plan fully supports efforts by the State, County, and other organizations to permanently preserve the agricultural and open space resources in and around Burkittsville with the objective of sustaining the economic viability and equity of the existing farms and agricultural operators. Recognizing that loss of agricultural resources to residential development can create serious long-term fiscal impacts to the municipality, the Town fully supports and will actively promote the following programs to protect Burkittsville's agricultural resources: the Maryland Heritage Areas Program, the Rural Historic Village Protection Program and the Conservation Easement program of the Maryland Environmental Trust, the Agricultural Easement and District programs of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, the agricultural preservation programs of Frederick County, the efforts of Maryland Program Open Space and the Maryland Department of Transportation to protect important nationally recognized Civil War heritage sites and viewsheds at Burkittsville. ■



# Comprehensive Land Use

# Transportation

## Streets and Highways in Burkittsville

One state-maintained highway, MD 17, and one road maintained by Frederick County, Gapland Road, are the main traffic arteries within the Town of Burkittsville. Within the Town corporate limits, Gapland Road is known as Main Street and MD 17 is known as Potomac Street. The intersection of these two streets is the town center.

Burkittsville contains a network of minor streets and alleys that form a nearly complete rectilinear grid with Main Street serving as the center of grid. The minor streets and alleys branch off of Main Street or Potomac Street, and with the exception of Weiner Drive, reconnect with Main Street or Potomac Street at another point. The minor streets and alleys are all paved and serve the rear of properties, as well as the abutting agricultural fields within the Town. Most lots within Burkittsville can be classified as "through lots," since they have frontage on more than one street. No new roads have been constructed in Burkittsville in the 20th Century and as a result, the Town lacks discontinuous, non-linking street patterns, with the exception of Weiner Drive which is an old farm lane. Burkittsville does not contain any cul-de-sac streets. The minor street and alley network includes: Ahalt Road, Cemetery Drive, Lake Side Drive, Locust Drive, North Cemetery Drive, Pfeifer Lane, Seminary Lane, and Weiner Drive.

The State has no plans to upgrade or modify MD 17 which is classified as a minor arterial. Frederick County plans no changes to Gapland Road, which is classified as a collector. Street widths in Burkittsville represent a

departure from modern subdivision standards. Main Street is a paved 30 ft. wide road with curbs on both sides. On-street parking is permitted on both sides of Main Street. Potomac Street is a paved 24 ft. wide road with a gravel shoulder. No on-street parking is permitted on Potomac Street. The minor streets and alleys vary in width from 24 ft. to 12 ft. The minor streets and alleys are a key element in the local street pattern. The minor streets and alleys allow buildings to be constructed near to the sidewalk and street removing the need for front yard driveways and curb cuts for driveways off of Main Street. The lack of curb cuts permits more room for on-street parking along Main Street. There are no significant safety problems on any Town streets other than excessive vehicular speeds on portions of East and West Main Street, although increasing levels of through vehicular traffic are a concern since sidewalks are discontinuous along Main Street. The availability of on-street parking appears to meet the needs of the community.

Main Street or Gapland Road is classified as a collector alignment by Frederick County. Average daily traffic on Gapland Road increased from 218 trips per day in 1984 to 697 trips per day in 1994, indicating an increase of nearly 220 percent in the average daily vehicle traffic using Gapland Road during this ten year period. These data were obtained at the Gapland Road bridge, which is located east of Burkittsville, approximately one mile west of MD 383. Vehicular counts on Gapland Road west of Burkittsville are not available for this time period. The average daily traffic counts for Potomac Street (i.e., MD 17), south of Main Street, indicate a significant increase of 1,132 vehicles per day between 1990 and 1995. Numerous Burkittsville residents attest to the large increase in morning and evening peak hour vehicular traffic on West Main



### Burkittsville Average Daily Vehicle Traffic Counts

	1984	1990	1991	1994	1995
MD 17 - Potomac St., 0.5 mile north of Gapland Road - Main St.	-	-	-	-	1,106
MD 17 - Potomac St., 0.5 mile south of Gapland Road - Main St.	-	1,500	1,300	-	2,632
MD 17 North of Picnic Woods Road	-	1,300	1,750	-	2,632
Gapland Road at Bridge East of MD 17	218	-	659	697	-
Gapland Road West of MD 17	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: MD State Highway Administration & Frederick County Dept. of Planning & Zoning

Street over the past decade. It is assumed that most of the morning peak hour vehicle trips originate in Washington County.

West of South Mountain, the Pleasant Valley area of Washington County from Rohresville south to Weverton is currently zoned "Conservation." Washington County's "Conservation" zoning permits subdivision at a density of one lot per three acres. Although portions of Pleasant Valley experience percolation difficulties which deters large-scale well and septic development, the possibility for increased large lot residential development in the Pleasant Valley area west of South Mountain remains quite high. While a build-out scenario in Pleasant Valley at the currently allowable residential density is considered to be unlikely through the year 2020, it is safely assumed that Pleasant Valley could accommodate 800 or more additional single family residences through the year 2020 under its current zoning.

Gapland Road is one of only three alignments that traverse South Mountain south of Boonsboro. The others are Reno Monument Road five miles north of Gapland Road and US 340 located seven miles south of Burkittsville. This Plan estimates that over one-half of vehicle trips generated by residential development in the area between Rohresville and Brownsville use Gapland

Road as a primary east-bound commuter route. The prospect of additional commuter traffic is a serious concern to the residents of Burkittsville. Main Street and particularly the intersection of Main Street and Potomac Street do not have the capacity to accommodate heavy vehicular use without improvements that will alter the residential character of Main Street. Traffic capacity improvements to Main Street to address high vehicle usage could include signalization at the Main and Potomac Street intersection or the loss of on-street parking on one side of the Main Street, among other options. Town residents believe that increases in vehicular traffic through Burkittsville will reduce the overall quality of life for residents and recommend that options be considered to reduce or reverse the rate of growth of through vehicular traffic.

Since a construction of a bypass around Burkittsville to accommodate either east-west or north-south vehicle movements is not a possibility due the large number of agricultural and conservation easements surrounding the Town, other transportation alternatives should be considered. Projected traffic along Gapland Road/Main Street will necessitate the use of effective transportation system management techniques to reduce both vehicular speeds coming off South Mountain as well as the total amount of through vehicular trips using Burkittsville. ■

This Plan recommends that a qualified transportation consultant be obtained to thoroughly analyze existing and proposed transportation patterns and to prepare a transportation plan for Burkittsville to more effectively manage the speed and volume of through vehicular traffic, while seeking to reduce overall amount of vehicular trips, and to provide a safe and efficient environment for pedestrians throughout the Town. The transportation plan that will be prepared, including its goals, policies, and recommendations will be adopted as an element of this Comprehensive Plan and will be implemented through the regulatory and funding decisions of Town, County, and State officials.

This Plan recommends a change in road classifications within Burkittsville. Main Street (i.e., Gapland Road) will be redesignated as a local road and Potomac Street (i.e., MD 17) will be redesignated as a collector alignment within the corporate limits of Burkittsville. The Town will seek to have the Collector designation removed for Gapland Road from MD 383 west to the Washington County line, while redesignating Picnic Woods Road from a local road to a collector in order to redirect road improvements from Gapland Road to the Picnic Woods corridor.

## Public Transportation

There is currently no direct public transportation service to or from the Burkittsville area. Frederick County's TransIT public transportation service agency provides fixed-route public bus service to Jefferson, Petersville, Knoxville, and Brunswick linking these nearby communities with the City of Frederick and the

Brunswick MARC commuter rail service. From the Brunswick MARC station, riders can connect with Amtrak service facilities in Washington, D.C. or in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia to provide connections throughout the Amtrak system.

At present, TransIT provides specialized paratransit transportation service for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and medical assistance recipients going to and from medical appointments. This service, which is available to eligible residents of Burkittsville, operates as a demand-response system. Trips made in advance can be guaranteed, while requests for immediate transportation cannot always be met. Medicaid recipients can travel free of charge if their trip is for medical purposes.

Potential future enhancement of public transportation services in Burkittsville could include expanded service by TransIT or a future Frederick County or regional public transportation service to cover routine travel to shopping, medical care, and other services. Population density in the immediate area may not support fixed-route public bus service to Burkittsville. Improvements to existing services are contingent upon the availability of funding. Public transportation in rural, less populated areas, such as Burkittsville requires greater public subsidies than does public transportation in urban settings.

Park and Ride commuter parking lots are available at both Brunswick and Jefferson along US 340 and at the MARC Station in downtown Brunswick. The Park and Ride parking facilities at Brunswick and Jefferson can be used by commuters at no charge. ■

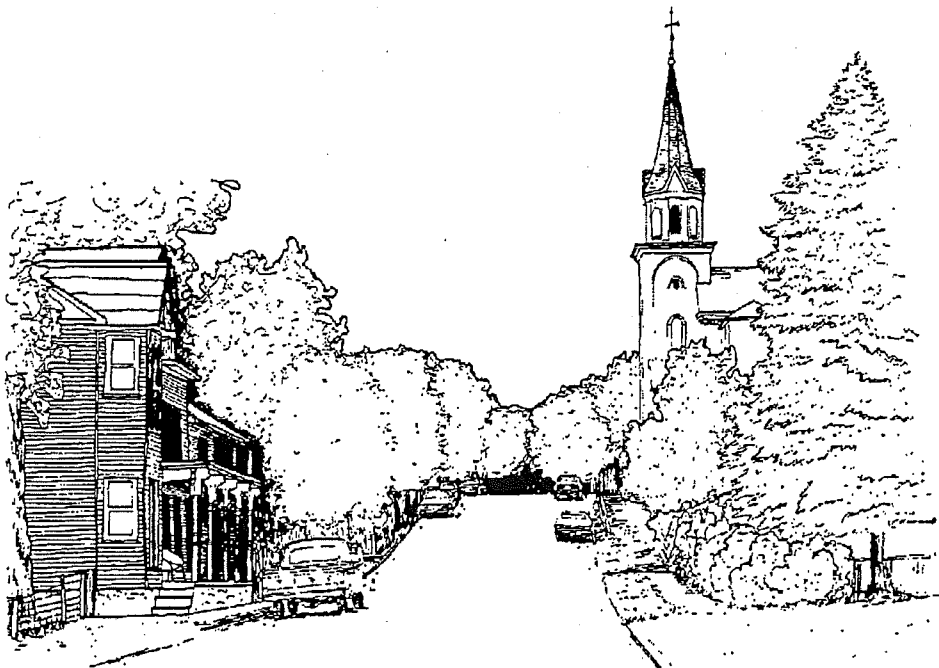
## Pedestrian and Bicycle Movement

**P**rivate sidewalks are located along both sides of East and West Main Street, although some gaps exist. North and South Potomac Street and the network of minor streets and alleys do not contain private sidewalks. There are no bicycle paths in Burkittsville. Pedestrians and bicyclists share the roads with motor vehicles, farm vehicles, and occasional horse traffic. As a result of increased levels of vehicular traffic along Main Street, restoration of Burkittsville's private sidewalks is a priority.

The Appalachian Trail is located along the crest of South Mountain directly west of Burkittsville. This designated "National

Scenic Trail" extends from Georgia to Maine and is used solely as a footpath. Gapland Road and Brownsville Road, located immediately south of Burkittsville allow for access to the Appalachian Trail.

Bicycle traffic is increasing in Burkittsville. This includes both cycling activities by residents and seasonal through bicycle traffic on weekends and evenings. Because of the low and moderate levels of motor vehicle traffic on local streets, bicyclists will continue to share the road with vehicular traffic in Burkittsville. Planned improvements at the MARC Station in downtown Brunswick include bicycle racks and lockers to allow for use by bicycle commuters. Since Burkittsville is located six miles north of the Brunswick MARC station, Town residents will have the option of a convenient bicycle commute to the MARC facility.



**T**his Plan recommends refurbishment of the complete network of private sidewalks along Main Street. Repair and reestablishment of sidewalks along Main Street will be completed in conjunction with the Streetscape Improvement Project that is proposed for Burkittsville. The Streetscape Improvement Project is intended to remove unsightly overhead wires and poles from Main Street, result in planting of street trees along Main and Potomac Streets, and improve pedestrian access for residents through the restoration and linking of the existing sidewalk network along Main Street. ■





# Community Services and Facilities

**B**urkittsville has five community facilities: the U.S. Post Office; the Town Park; a pond; the Ruritan Club Community Center, and the former Resurrection Reformed Church, now owned by the South Mountain Heritage Society. The Town contracts for solid waste collection and recycling services and snow removal services. Other services, including fire and rescue, public education, library services, and public health are provided through Frederick County. Law enforcement in the Burkittsville area is provided by the Maryland State Police and by the Frederick County Sheriff's Department.

## Public Schools

**P**ublic school services and facilities are provided to Burkittsville residents through Frederick County Public Schools. Currently, the public schools serving the Burkittsville area are located in the Brunswick Planning Region. These include Valley Elementary, located along MD 180 at Jefferson, Brunswick Elementary which is located on Central Avenue in the City of Brunswick, and Brunswick Middle and Brunswick High located on Cummings Drive in the City of Brunswick.

As of 1996, Valley Elementary is at 100 percent capacity. It is projected that Valley Elementary and Brunswick Middle will exceed 110 percent capacity in the year 2000. Frederick County Public Schools has programmed a 300 seat addition for Brunswick Middle for fiscal year 2000. The proposed addition is designed to alleviate the projected capacity problems at Brunswick Middle. Brunswick Elementary is not scheduled for immediate improvement, although a site for a new Brunswick Elementary is proposed north of the existing Brunswick Middle and High School campus and MD 464. Presently, Burkittsville's children currently attend Valley Elementary in Jefferson, capacity constraints at Valley Elementary could be addressed through redistricting which may have an impact on Brunswick Elementary.

Below are the current and projected enrollments for Valley Elementary, Brunswick Middle, and Brunswick High through the year 2003. Based upon the rapid and continuing increase in residential construction since 1988, particularly in the Jefferson area, there is reason to believe that the projected increases in public school enrollment are understated. This could potentially have and impact on Valley Elementary and also

Public School Enrollments and Projections for the Brunswick Region

School Capacity Facility (2003)	Total Enrollment (2003)	Building Capacity (1996)	Percent Capacity (1996)	Projected Enrollment (1996)	Percent Capacity (2000)	Projected Enrollment (2000)	Percent Capacity (2000)
Valley Elementary	554	554	100%	630	114%	638	115%
Brunswick Elementary	570	589	97%	564	96%	568	96%
Brunswick Middle	539	600	90%	676	113%	701	117%
Brunswick High	770	945	81%	857	91%	948	100%

Source: Frederick County Public Schools, July 1996. Projections based on no new facilities and equated enrollments.

Brunswick Elementary. Brunswick High School is projected to remain under capacity for most of this decade. ■

## Solid Waste Service

**T**he Town of Burkittsville maintains a contract with a private hauler to collect and dispose of trash from town residents. Frederick County owns and operates the Reich's Ford Landfill. Burkittsville has contracted for services that utilize the Frederick County landfill, including related services. Recycling services are provided through the Frederick County landfill. Frederick County is working to reduce its waste stream through recycling. Burkittsville currently participates in Frederick County's recycling operation. This includes the following materials: glass, plastics, newspaper, cardboard, metal cans, and waste oil products. Currently, containers are provided for recycling at Middletown, Brunswick, and at the Frederick County landfill. ■

## Protective & Emergency Services

**P**olice protection for Burkittsville are provided by the Maryland State Police, from barracks located on US 40 in the City of Frederick. When a crime occurs in the Burkittsville, either the State Police or the County Sheriff's Department responds depending on the location and nature of the crime and which unit is in closer proximity.

Burkittsville does not contain either a fire or rescue company within its corporate limits. Primary fire and rescue services for Burkittsville are provided by Company 7 of the Middletown Volunteer Fire Company, Inc., located at Church Street and MD 17 in

Middletown. Backup fire and rescue service is provided by the Brunswick Volunteer Fire Company and from a volunteer fire company in nearby Washington County. A fire pond is located within the Burkittsville corporate limits on the southwest corner of South Potomac Street and Lake Side Drive.

Burkittsville is located within the four mile fire service area of the Middletown Volunteer Fire Company, although it is at the outer portion of Middletown's four mile fire service area. Burkittsville is outside of the four mile service areas of Brunswick and Jefferson.

The need for a fire substation in the Burkittsville area has been noted in previous Frederick County Comprehensive Plans. Fire suppression services cannot provide immediate service to Burkittsville and the same applies to rescue and emergency services. Development of a fire substation at Burkittsville has been discussed by County officials, but there have been no definite plans to establish a fire company within the Town. While the absence of a public water system within the Town is a factor limiting the creation of a fire company, the need for a local fire service company within Burkittsville should be fully investigated and the Town should consider acquiring appropriate acreage, to be held in a non-improved state, for a future fire company site should a company be organized at some future date. ■

## Parks, Open Space & Community Facilities

**B**urkittsville acquired a one acre site in 1980 for a Town Park. This park acquisition was partially financed through the use of funds from Maryland Program Open Space (i.e., POS). The Town Park is located on the north side of East Main Street, west of Weiner Drive. The Town Park includes children's playground equipment, an asphalt volleyball/basketball court, and a general recreation area.

The Ruritan Club, a nonprofit civic association, owns and maintains for public use the former Burkittsville School. This building, built in 1914, is used for civic activities and functions unofficially as Burkittsville's community center. The building and grounds are used for public meetings of the Burkittsville Town Council, other Town Boards and Commissions, events for children, charitable dinners and fund-raising events, and voting for elections.

The fire pond, located on the southwest corner of South Potomac Street and Lake Side Drive, was constructed to provide a ready source of water in the event of fire. The pond is used for fishing and other community activities.

The Resurrection Reformed Church at 3 East Main Street was constructed in 1829. This structure is currently owned by the South Mountain Heritage Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit land trust that operates in the Burkittsville area. The former Resurrection Reformed Church is used for an occasional community activity and for living history events in Burkittsville.

Gathland State Park is a 23 acre park facility located at the crest of South Mountain at Crampton's Gap, one mile west of Burkittsville. Gathland contains the War Correspondents Memorial, structures and ruins associated with the writer George Alfred Townsend (i.e., Gath), Civil War monuments and historical markers, a picnic pavilion, and a parking area. The Appalachian Trail extends through Gathland State Park and a restroom facility is available to hikers and other park users.

Located on the north side of East Main Street in the south east section of the Town, the former Shisler Farm, also known as the historic Harley Farm, was acquired in fee by the Maryland Department of Transportation to protect the site from a proposed subdivision. The 97 acre farm was acquired in 1994 using a combination of Maryland POS monies and ISTEA Transportation Enhancement funding. Through the use of a conservation/historical easement held jointly by the Maryland Environmental Trust and the Maryland Historical Trust, the Shisler/Harley Farm will remain permanently undeveloped. The farm includes the historic Harley House, located immediately east of Town boundary. The farm house was constructed originally in 1849 by Otho Harley and substantially reconstructed in 1899. The Civil War battle of Crampton's Gap/South Mountain (September 14, 1862) is reputed to have begun when Confederate artillery on the Brownsville Pass Road, west of Burkittsville, opened upon the 96th Pennsylvania in the front yard of the Harley House. The Town will continue to coordinate the future use of the historic Harley House with the Maryland Department of Transportation. The Town recommends that the Harley House be available for occasional interpretive uses, possibly in conjunction with a bed and breakfast or

similar lodging activities. The remainder of the farm should remain in agriculture to serve as an open space buffer to the historic village.

A Goal of this Comprehensive Plan is to **Maintain Burkittsville's Historical Integrity as a Rural Village.** The Town of Burkittsville clearly recognizes that the surrounding farmland and mountain ridge which comprise Burkittsville's remarkable viewshed are essential resources that provide a buffer from other non-related development in the Middletown Valley and are the principal features that sustain the rural historic village. Accordingly, this Plan has an **Objective to Maintain the viewshed of the surrounding farmland and mountain ridge.** To accomplish this objective, the Town will actively pursue the **Policy to Coordinate with County and State authorities to make maximum use of existing programs to purchase agricultural, conservation, and scenic easements, and to actively promote the conservation of open space and the preservation of nearby agricultural resources both within and outside the Town corporate limits.** Protection and preservation of adjacent agricultural and open space uses will be promoted both through the development review and funding decisions that are made by the Town, as well as through negotiated agreements with Frederick County and the State of Maryland. ■

## Water & Sewerage Services

**B**urkittsville lacks public water and sewerage services. Instead, residences and businesses in the Town maintain individual well and septic systems to obtain potable water and to remove household

effluent. Since most the residences in the Town have been occupied for more than a century, failure of septic systems and the resulting contamination of nearby groundwater resources has been a frequent occurrence in parts of Burkittsville. Given that the size of the average lot is less than one-half acre and the limitations imposed by 150 years of ground discharge of untreated effluent and the continued reliance on residential septic systems, portions of Burkittsville suffer from septic failure and groundwater contamination. Many wells, especially on the east side of the Town, no longer provide potable water.

The Town survey that was taken in conjunction with the update of this Comprehensive Plan indicated that two-thirds of Burkittsville's residents were concerned about the continued adequacy of the individual wells within the Town. Residents were equally divided about the adequacy of individual septic fields. Declining water quality within Burkittsville has prompted Frederick County to list the Town on the Needs Inventory of the County Water and Sewerage Plan, although the Water and Sewerage Plan does not specify a time frame or funding source for water and/or sewerage improvements.

The prospect that Burkittsville will obtain both a public water and public sewerage system in the foreseeable future is not high. Since Burkittsville is a community with less than 75 households with a population less than 200 persons, it will be difficult for the Town to finance a public water and sewerage system through its own resources. The likelihood of funding assistance through Frederick County and the State of Maryland for public water and sewerage services may depend on whether the Town would be willing to accept more growth which will

allow the costs of one or both systems to be allocated to more households, effectively bringing down the prorated costs of the public improvements. These options deserve further scrutiny.

The Town Survey also indicated that most Burkittsville residents oppose additional development in and around the Town. Currently, one of the chief protections against the growth and development that residents oppose is the lack of public water and sewerage systems in Burkittsville, combined with the fact that soil types and geology in the surrounding area generally does not allow for adequate percolation to permit construction of significant numbers of new residences. Clearly, the benefits of municipal water and sewerage systems need to be balanced with the prospect of opening up the opportunity for new development in and around Burkittsville.

In order to balance the no-growth attitudes of Town residents and the need for clean water in parts of the community while addressing the condition of septic failure in parts of Burkittsville, the problems of potable water and wastewater treatment should be thoroughly examined and defined. Is the problem in Burkittsville the lack of potable water that can be obtained from on-site wells at a number of properties or is the contaminated water situation, in fact, a symptom of overall septic failure in parts of the Town? Burkittsville must take a long hard look at what the problems actually are.

This Plan recommends that the Town fully examine the community water and wastewater problem through the use of a professional consulting engineer who has considerable small town experience and system design experience for small com-

munities, including the willingness and capability to utilize innovative and affordable alternative technologies, where appropriate. The plan will address the costs of construction of the project(s), the costs associated with maintenance and operation of the system(s) after they are built, and approaches for financing the upfront costs. The community water and wastewater plan that will be prepared, including its goals, policies, and recommendations, will be adopted as an element of this Comprehensive Plan and will be implemented through the regulatory and funding decisions of Town, County, and State officials.

From the perspective of future community water and wastewater systems, protection of the agricultural and open space resources surrounding the historic village are a priority. Some part or portions of the adjacent agricultural fields within the Town may be required for future extension of a *community septic field* or other form of *large soil absorption system* (i.e., LSA system) as indicated in the future community water and wastewater plan. Protection of the undeveloped agricultural areas within the Burkittsville corporate limits is a priority in order to maintain sufficient acreage needs for a future LSA system. This Plan recommends that the Town work to acquire and bank acreage sufficient for a community LSA system, should this need be indicated in the community water and wastewater plan. Therefore, easement acquisitions adjacent to Burkittsville's town center and historic village should include language that will accommodate a future LSA system, if such a system is required by the municipality in the future.

The proposed streetscape improvement plan should be fully coordinated with the priorities indicated in the community water and wastewater plan, including laying of pipe for community water or community wastewater treatment systems, where applicable. Coordination of streetscape improvements and water/wastewater construction needs is essential to combine all improvements needed to Main Street (or Potomac Street) and avoid the need for additional construction at a future point along Main Street.

Surface water impoundment sites should be reserved for future needs if identified in the community water and wastewater plan. Water quality in these areas should be maintained by encouraging the use of best management practices to minimize non-point source pollution and by locating proposed development away from identified impoundment sites and watersheds.

Financing plans for proposed community water or community wastewater systems should be designed to raise sufficient revenue from those who will be directly served by the system(s). Any new development within the Town limits will be required to connect to and pay costs associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of the community water and/or wastewater system. The community water and wastewater plan will address all potential funding sources for the proposed system(s), including State or County revolving loans, State or County bonds, State grants, federal loan or grant programs, bond or grant application notes, loans from commercial institutions, cash on hand, property assessments, and cost sharing with other users (i.e., such as Gathland State Park).

All community water or wastewater systems will be owned and operated by the Frederick County Department of Public Works Bureau of Water and Sewer and shall be designed and installed in accordance with applicable Maryland and Frederick County water quality and wastewater treatment standards and regulations. ■

## Other Community Services

Burkittsville residents obtain library services through the branch Frederick County Library facility at Middletown. In the past, the Frederick County Library Bookmobile has provided service to Town residents, although Bookmobile service was discontinued due to low levels of usage within the Town. The possibility exists to reestablish Bookmobile service to Burkittsville, provided that dates and times can be coordinated to promote higher usage levels by Town residents.

At present, the town lacks local health services or a local health provider. Medical and dental services are available in Middletown and Brunswick. Regional hospital facilities are located in Frederick and Hagerstown. Other health services are available to Burkittsville residents through the Frederick County Health Department, including nursing, mental health, family planning and substance abuse services. Transportation for medical visits can be arranged through Frederick County's TransIT service.

The Frederick County Department of Social Services provides family and adult services, child welfare, and day care assistance to residents of Burkittsville. ■

# Plan Implementation

**B**urkittsville officials should take several steps to implement the goals and policies contained in this comprehensive plan. Some of these steps are:

- \* Update the Town zoning map and zoning ordinance to be consistent with the comprehensive plan map and with goals and policies stated in this plan.
- \* Review Burkittsville's subdivision regulations to ensure that they are consistent with goals and policies contained in this comprehensive plan.
- \* Examine the Town's procedures for review and development of proposed development and make changes, if necessary, to streamline the process.
- \* Implement capital project review procedures that ensure that infrastructure projects undertaken by the Town government are consistent with the development goals and policies included in this plan.
- \* Coordinate with Frederick County officials and State of Maryland agencies to implement the goals and policies outlined in this plan through the regulatory and funding decisions by the County and the State.
- \* Emphasize the need for Frederick County to limit development and public works improvements within the one mile of the Town so as to protect Burkittsville's sensitive areas, agricultural resources, and Civil War heritage sites and to avoid low density development sprawl.
- \* Continue to work with County and State officials to implement agricultural preservation and conservation easement agreements to protect Burkittsville's sensitive areas, agricultural resources, and Civil War heritage sites.
- \* Work with County and State officials to develop and implement a Community Water and Wastewater Plan for the Town.
- \* Move forward with the development and implementation of the Streetscape Improvement Plan.

Town officials should develop public investment strategies and resources that further the goals and policies identified in this Plan. As part of this effort, the Town should develop a capital improvements program that includes the infrastructure projects outlined in this Comprehensive Plan. In particular, it is critical that the Town proceed with its project to remove contamination of the Town's groundwater sources and to develop reliable water supplies.

The Town should continue to involve community organizations in planning and funding public projects. In addition, Town officials should continue to be aggressive in seeking County, State, and federal grants to community projects outlined in this plan. ■



# Appendix

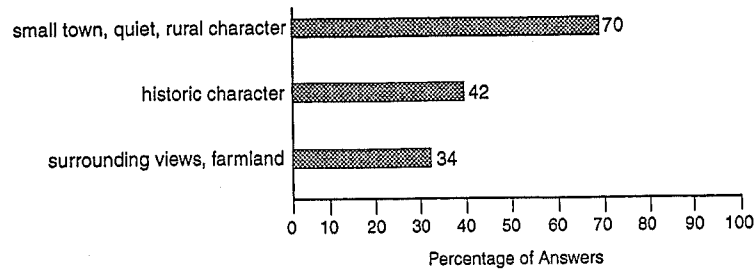
In June 1995, a Town Comprehensive Plan Survey was conducted among the residents of Burkittsville. A questionnaire was circulated to all households within the Town. Forty-five responses were received, representing approximately two-thirds of the households within the corporate limits. The survey instrument and the tabulated responses from the Town survey are included in this appendix.



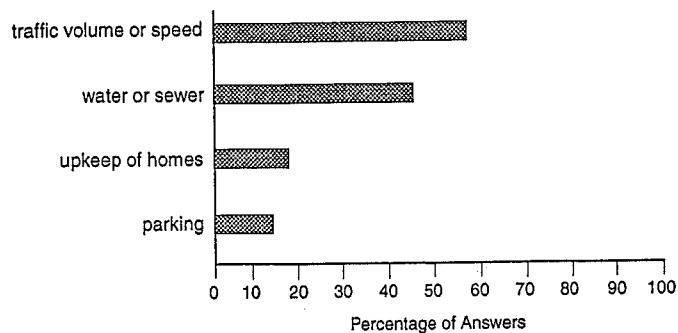
# 1995-2015 Burkittsville Comprehensive Plan Questionnaire

First, we have two general questions. answer them as briefly or in as much detail as you wish. use the back of the questionnaire for additional comments

1. What are the most important things that you like about Burkittsville that should be preserved?



2. What are the most important things about Burkittsville that you think need to be improved?

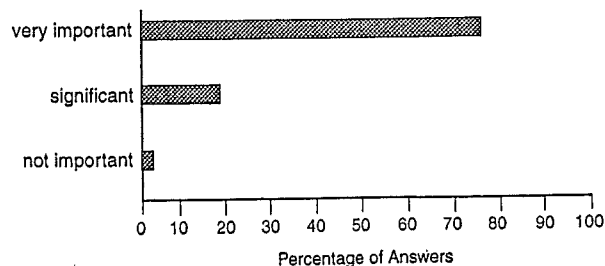


Next, we want your responses to some specific issues. we have left space beside or below each item for your additional comments.

## 3. Development

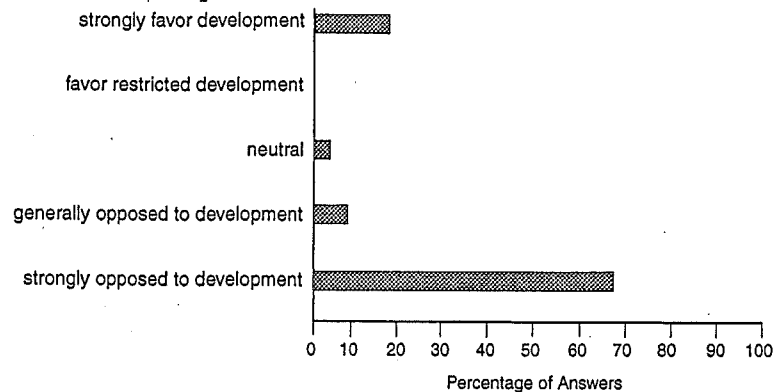
3a. How important are the farmland views from your home?

( ) Very important    ( ) Significant    ( ) Not important



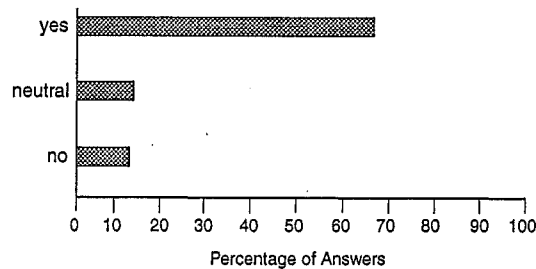
3b. What is your feeling about converting the surrounding farmland into additional houses?

- ☐ Strongly favor development  
☐ Favor restricted development  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Generally opposed to development  
☐ Strongly opposed to development



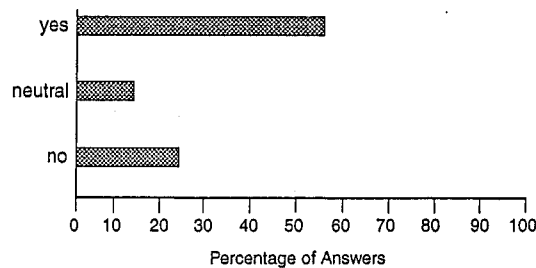
3c. Should Burkittsville try to preserve open space by finding grants to purchase easements, or by other equitable means?

- ☐ Yes ☐ Neutral ☐ No



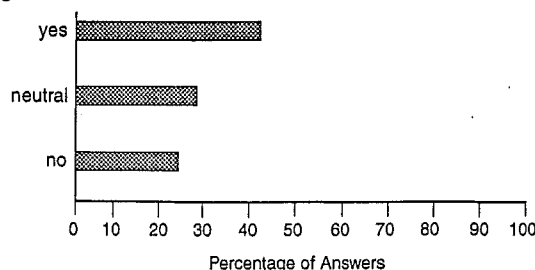
3d. Should new buildings constructed in Burkittsville over the next 20 years have comparable shapes and volumes with those already here?

- ☐ Yes ☐ Neutral ☐ No



3e. Should new building facades have comparable window and door shapes with those already here?

- ☐ Yes ☐ Neutral ☐ No

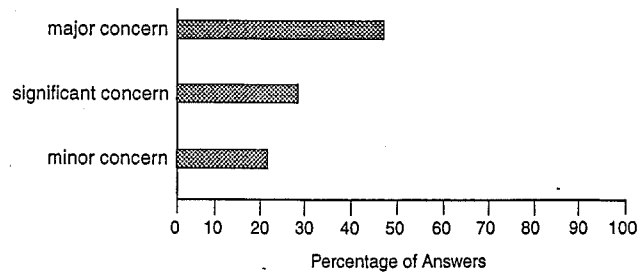


#### 4. Traffic

Currently, approximately 2,000 vehicles use route 17 through town every day. About 1,000 use Main Street every day. To give you an idea of how fast this has been increasing, a traffic study at the bridge on Gapland Road in 1984 counted 218 vehicles crossing the bridge in a day. Bby 1991, this had tripled to 659. Given the growth of housing in Middletown Valley, it appears that traffic will continue to grow rapidly.

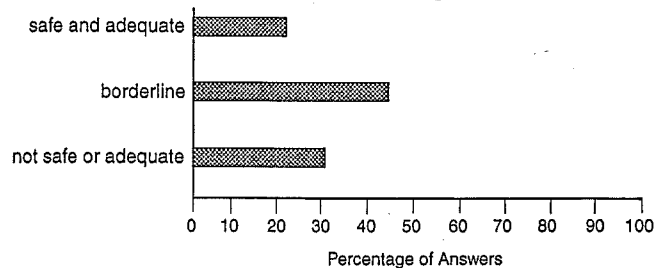
4a. Is traffic volume a concern to you?

☐ Major concern ☐ Significant concern ☐ Minor concern



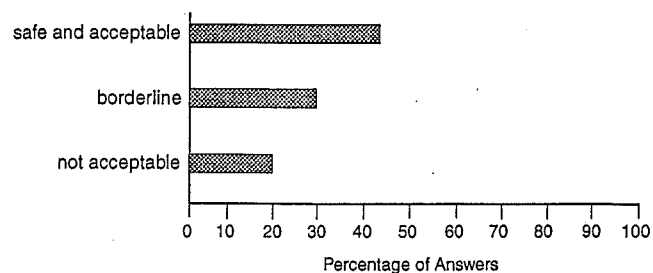
4b. Do you consider the present street system safe and adequate for current and projected traffic volumes?

☐ Safe and adequate ☐ Borderline ☐ Not safe and adequate



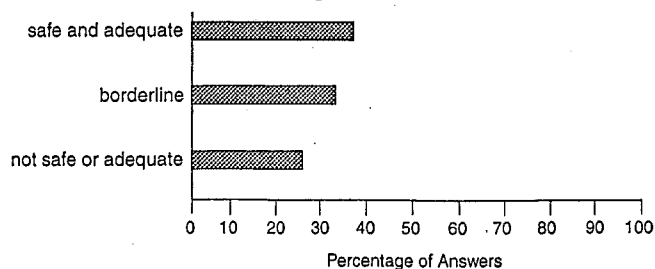
4c. Are current parking facilities on Potomac and Main Street acceptable?

☐ Acceptable ☐ Borderline ☐ Not acceptable



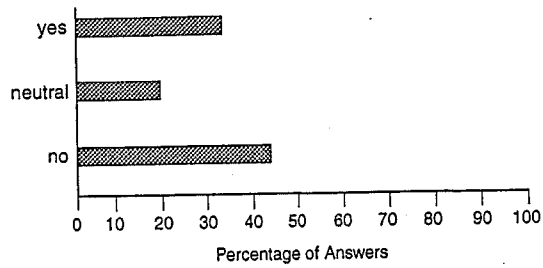
4d. Do you think Burkittsville has adequate sidewalks?

☐ Adequate and safe ☐ Borderline ☐ Not adequate or safe



4e. Should the town explore funding options to upgrade the sidewalks?

☐ Yes      ☐ Neutral      ☐ No

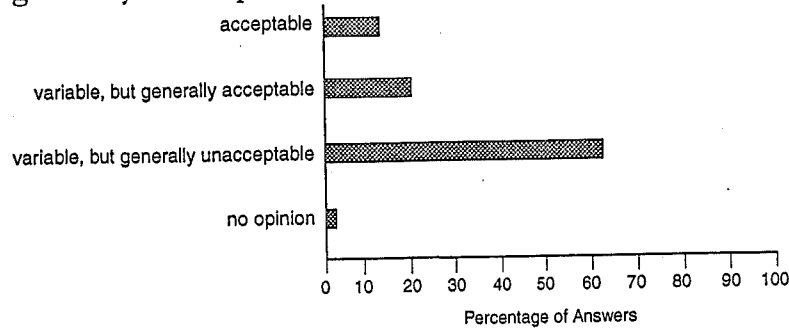


5.

### Water and Sewage

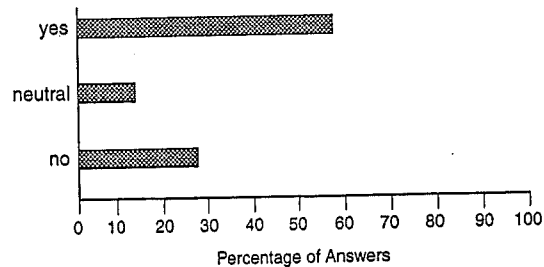
5a. Do you consider Burkittsville's individual wells functionally acceptable in terms of water quantity and quality?

☐ Acceptable      ☐ Variable, but generally acceptable  
☐ Variable, but generally unacceptable      ☐ No opinion



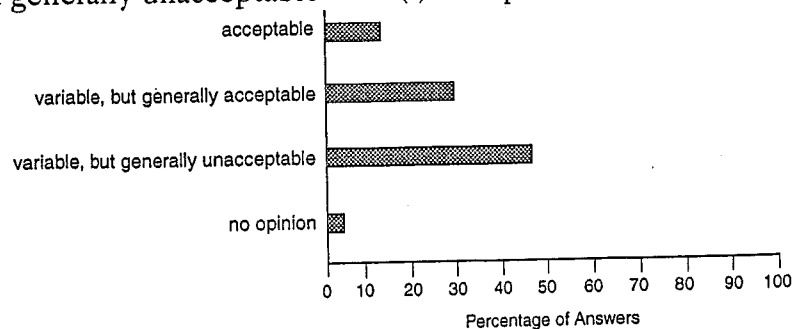
5b. Should the town explore funding and engineering options to recreate a cost-effective corporate water system?

☐ Yes      ☐ Neutral      ☐ No



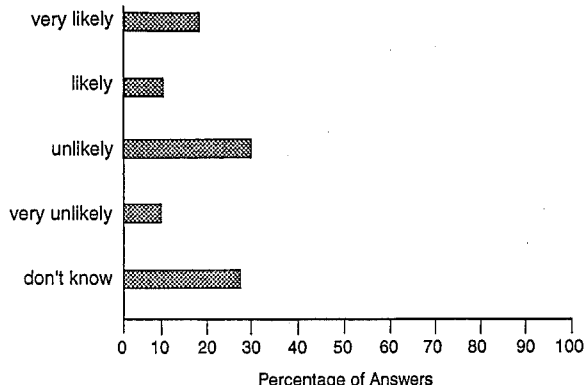
5c. Do you think Burkittsville's individual septic systems acceptable in terms of safe waste water dispersal?

☐ Acceptable      ☐ Variable, but generally acceptable  
☐ Variable, but generally unacceptable      ☐ No opinion



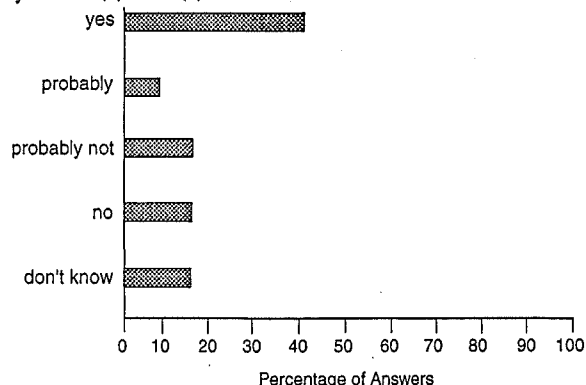
5d. The life of a septic field is usually 20-40 years. Some Burkittsville houses have land for constructing a new field while others do not. To the best of your knowledge, how likely is it that you will need to replace your septic field during the next 20 years?

☐ Very likely. ☐ Likely. ☐ Unlikely ☐ Very unlikely. ☐ Don't know



5e. To the best of your knowledge, do you have room to construct a new septic field on your property?

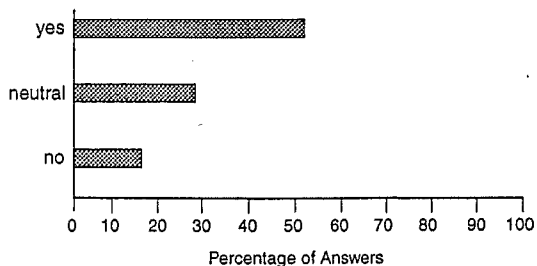
☐ Yes. ☐ Probably. ☐ Probably not. ☐ No ☐ Don't know



If a new field is not available, repairing the old field becomes complicated and expensive. But central sewer treatment plants that meet federal and state water standards are also expensive, costing millions of dollars to build and requiring full-time staff. In the past, federal and state agencies would match local sewer construction dollars but would not help with operational dollars. A second option is to purchase space for "repair" drainfield sites on lands alongside the town.

5f. Should Burkittsville explore ways of improving the current individual septic drainfield situation, such as seeking funds to purchase "repair" drainfield sites on lands alongside the town?

☐ Yes ☐ Neutral ☐ No



5g. Do you have any other suggestions for dealing with future water and sewage requirements?